MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
20 NOVEMBER 1963

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MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
20 NOVEMBER 1963

The Commission met, pursuant to notice, with William Walton, Chairman, presiding.

Present were: Members - William Walton
Gordon Bunshaft
Burnham Kelly
Theodore Roszak
Aline Saarinen
Hideo Sasaki
John Carl Warnecke

Staff - L.R.Wilson, Secretary
C.H.Atherton, Asst. Sec'y
C.L.Martin, Counsel
Myra Younker, Editor
Leone M. Vialpando, Reporter

SUBMISSIONS-REVIEWS-INTERVIEWS

1. General Services Administration, Public Buildings Service

a. Federal Office Building No. 5 - Revised Design

Mr. Karel H. Yasko, Assistant Commissioner of Design and Construction, Mr. J. Rowland Snyder, Director, Design Division, Public Buildings Service, and Mr. Nathaniel C. Curtis, Mr. Bernard J. Grad, Mr. Grant Fordyce and Mr. David Dibner, consulting architects, met with the Commission to present revised designs for Federal Office Building No. 5.

Mr. Curtis presented four schemes for the massing of the building which were the architects' interpretation of the recommendations of the Commission made at the 16 October 1963 meeting.

Scheme A showed a six-story block building 750 feet long, 200 feet wide and 130 feet high. The building would be set back 180 feet from Independence Avenue. The building would not be symetrical over the Tenth Street Mall because of the irregular shape of the site. Seventy percent of the space of the building would be inside space without windows.

Scheme B showed a six-story block building 630 feet long, 240 feet wide and 130 feet high. This building would be symetrical over the Tenth Street Mall because of its shorter length and greater width.

Scheme C showed a six-story doughnut shaped building with two wings spanning the Tenth Street Mall. Mr. Curtis stated that this design was not preferred because of the sight lines created and the height above the Mall

which would be necessary because of the 18 foot rise in elevation of the Tenth Street Mall, from Independence Avenue over the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks.

Scheme D was a variation of the original design consisting of a 5-story block building 750 feet long, 120 feet wide and 100 feet high facing Independence Avenue, and two 5-story wings 120 feet wide and 330 feet long parallel to Tenth Street. This scheme would be symetrical over the Tenth Street Mall.

Mr. Curtis stated that the architects felt it was important that the building be symetrical above the Tenth Street Mall and that the spaces between the buildings on either side of it be closed by structures as much as possible, and that the Tenth Street Mall deserved recognition which they thought would be lost if a building 240 feet wide spanned it because of the tunnel effect such a building would create. For these reasons, the architects preferred Scheme D.

The building in Scheme D would be raised on a series of pre-stressed concrete columns spaced 30 feet on center on either side of Tenth Street and 60 feet on center where the building would span the street and 40 feet through the width of the building.

Using a scale model of the site and adjoining buildings of the L'Enfant Plaza project and those along Independence Avenue, the architect placed block models of each scheme on the site.

After viewing the block models in place Mr. Bunshaft suggested that rather than set the building back from Independence Avenue it should be moved as far forward as possible in order to align with the facades of FOB 10B, the Health, Education and Welfare Building, and the Department of Agriculture Building. He pointed out that the building in Scheme A could be reduced in width from 200 feet wide to roughly 180 feet. He also thought that the system of columns on 60 foot centers should be utilized throughout if this could be done. He did not favor Scheme D.

Mr. Alan B. Elliot, Assistant Director, District of Columbia Redevelopment Land Agency, stated that the Agency objected to a wide building spanning the Tenth Street Mall which it was felt would create a tunnel. For this reason the agency favored Scheme D which would have the least amount of space over the Mall.

It was pointed out that all the space beneath the building in Scheme A would be raised 30 feet on columns and that this would be the opposite of a tunnel, whereas in Scheme D the wings of the building would more likely create a tunnel effect.

In a poll of the members each member expressed a preference for Scheme A and agreed that the building should be moved forward to Independence

Avenue. They pointed out that the space south of the building would have to be carefully developed and that detailed landscaping and parking plans should be submitted to the Commission.

Mr. Snyder stated that before the architects proceeded in the development of Scheme A it would be presented to the National Capital Planning Commission for its concurrence.

The Chairman was authorized to send a letter stating the Commission's views. EXHIBIT A

b. Regional Office Building, Revised Design for Alterations

Mr. Yasko explained that the proposal would retain the exterior structure of the building intact but with a new applied granite base to cover the existing loading bays. The roof structures would be enclosed in a simple form, the existing window sashes would be replaced,and the building repainted to emphasize the existing pilasters and de-emphasize the spandrels.

The members were of the opinion that the building was a most important structure because of its size and location, and that it was desirable to improve its appearance. They recommended that the proposed base be eliminated, and suggested instead that the openings on the ground level be closed with concrete in the same character as the other portions of the building, and that the building be painted an unobtrusive color.

The members also recommended that a detailed landscaping plan be developed and asked that it be submitted to the Commission. They suggested that funds saved from omitting the proposed granite base should be diverted to the installation of trees on the north side of the building.

The Chairman was authorized to send a letter setting forth the recommendations of the Commission. EXHIBIT B

2. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Capital Region

a. Marion Park, Reservation No. 18, E Street, S.E. between 4th and 6th Streets - Revised Design

Mr. Robert C. Horne, Associate Regional Director, Mr. Robert W. Andrews, Chief, Design and Construction, Mr. Charles W. Lessig, Chief, Division of Architecture, National Park Service, National Capital Region, presented drawings of a revised design for landscaping the park to conform with the Commission's recommendation at the 15 October meeting that the design be restudied to give the park a greater unity of design.

Mr. Andrews showed the members three designs - the original design shown at the October meeting, a modification eliminating columnar trees

in the central portion of the park on axis with 5th Street, S.E., and a variation in which an oblique walkway was substituted for the paved central area.

The members' comment was that none of the revised designs met the members objections stated at the October meeting that the space of the long narrow park should not be split into two parts.

Mr. Andrews pointed out that the purpose of the walkways in the center of the park was to provide a passageway for foot traffic along Fifth Street.

Mr. Sasaki commented that he believed that the proposed designs lacked scale and represented merely a split in the middle. He thought that perhaps a low hedge around the perimeter would give a greater sense of being in a park and protected from the street.

The Commission asked that the design be restudied and new sketches submitted.

The Chairman was authorized to send a letter setting forth the Commission's views. EXHIBIT C

b. Calvert Street Bridge over Rock Creek Park - Revised Design

Mr. Horne presented additional material relating to a bridge to be built crossing Rock Creek on the tunnel approach to the new by-pass road through the National Zoological Park.

The members stated that because the design was part of an existing complex of bridges of the same design in the area the Commission would approve it. They suggested that in the case of future bridges located elsewhere they would like to see bridges incorporating a new railing and only one material - either all concrete or all stone.

The Chairman was authorized to send a letter setting forth the recommendations of the Commission. EXHIBIT D

3. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, National Institutes of Health

Addition to Building 12 - Proposed Design

Mr. Howard M. Biggs, Chief, Research Facilities Planning Branch, National Institutes of Health, and Mr. Robert O. Kidd, architect of the firm of Justement, Elam, Callmer and Kidd, met with the Commission to discuss a proposed design for an addition to Building 12 on the campus of the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Md.

Following Mr. Kidd's explanation of the purpose of the building, Mr.

Kelly stated that the Commission agreed that the design should be approved in principle but that the Commission was interested in the design of the whole area and would like to see a development plan which allocates uses, spaces for traffic, for parking, future buildings, etc. so that it could evaluate future building plans in accordance with the Department's own development plans.

Mr. Biggs replied a scale model of the campus was available and that he would be glad to arrange for the Commission to see it at a future meeting.

The Chairman was authorized to send a letter giving the Commission's approval of the proposed design. EXHIBIT E

4. General Services Administration, Public Buildings Service

Bureau of Printing and Engraving, Revised Design for Alterations - Inspection of Sample Installation

At 10:30 a.m. the members of the Commission proceeded to the Bureau of Printing and Engraving at 14th and D Streets, N.W., where they met with Mr. Henry J. Holtzclaw, Director, who explained his desire to aircondition the building and to improve its appearance as much as possible.

The members inspected a sample installation of the translucent fiberglass material which it was proposed would replace the existing glass in the interior courtyards along 14th Street and on the 15th Street facade. The members thought the material was satisfactory except for the blue-gray color. They recommended that a warmer tone should be used. They also thought the size of the individual panels in the windows should be kept as nearly identical to the size of the existing sash as possible. The use of glass on the end elevations facing 14th Street, and the alternating stone panels within the recessed courtyards, was also approved. EXHIBIT F

5. Freer Gallery of Art

Inspection of Proposed Acquisitions

In accordance with the usual custom the Commission visited the Freer Gallery of Art where the members met with Dr. John A. Pope, Director, and Dr. Harold P. Stern, Assistant Director, to inspect a number of Oriental works of art proposed for purchase. The Commission approved the items for purchase as listed in EXHIBIT G.

Thereafter, at 12 noon, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

C. L. Martin

C. L. Martin
Counsel

MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
20 November 1963

AM
9:30 I. CONVENE, ROOM 7000, INTERIOR DEPARTMENT BUILDING

II. SUBMISSIONS-REVIEWS-INTERVIEWS

9:35 1. General Services Administration, Public Buildings Service

a. Federal Office Building No. 5 - Revised Design

(Mr. Karel H. Yasko, Assistant Commissioner of Design and Construction, PBS; Mr. J. Rowland Snyder, Director, Design Division, PBS; Mr. Nathaniel C. Curtis, Jr., of Curtis & Davis, Associates; Mr. Bernard J. Grad, of Frank Grad & Sons; Mr. A. Grant Fordyce, of Fordyce & Hamby, Associates; Mr. David Dibner, of Fordyce & Hamby, Associates)

b. Regional Office Building, Revised Design for Alterations

(Mr. Yasko; Mr. Snyder; Mr. Wallace Meisen, Architect; Mr. Norman Harper, Engineer)

10:30 2. District of Columbia Government, Department of Licenses and Inspections

S.L. 64-37, Apartment House, 2700 Adams Mill Road, N.W. - Conference with architect

(Mr. J.P.Green, Assistant Superintendent of Licenses and Permits; Mr. J.B. Shapiro, builder; Mr. John H. Graham, architect)

11:00 3. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Capital Region

a. Morion Park, Reservation #18, E St., S.E. between 4th and 6th Sts. - Revised Design

b. Calvert Street Bridge over Rock Creek Park - Revised Design

(Mr. Robert C. Horne, Associate Regional Director, National Capital Region; Mr. Robert W. Andrews, Chief, National Capital Office, Design and Construction; Mr. Charles W. Lessig, Chief, Division of Architecture)

11:15 4. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, National Institutes of Health

Addition to Building 12 - Proposed Design

(Mr. Howard M. Biggs, Chief, Research Facilities Planning Branch, Division of Research Services, National Institutes of Health)

11:45 5. General Services Administration, Public Buildings Service

Bureau of Printing and Engraving, Revised Design for Alterations - Inspection of Sample Installation

12:00 6. Freer Gallery of Art

Inspection of Proposed Acquisitions

21 November 1963

Dear Bernie:

On November 20 we met again with the architects of FOB 5 and they have agreed to develop a study based on a single 5 story building approximately 200 feet wide and 750 feet long, moved forward to Independence Avenue in line with H.E.W., FOB 10B, and Agriculture. The 5 stories does not include the height of the area above 10th Street and the entrances to the building which will be open to the greatest extent possible.

We understand that this design will be presented to the Planning Commission and the Redevelopment Land Agency before returning here for detailed study.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Best wishes,

William Walton
Chairman

Honorable Bernard Boutin
Administrator
General Services Administration
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT A

22 November 1963

Dear Mr. Boutin:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at its meeting yesterday, considered a revised plan to renovate the exterior of the General Services Administration warehouse at 7th and D Streets, which has been recently converted into offices for Region Three.

As you know, we have on prior occasions been glad to recommend anything that would improve this building's appearance, but have always opposed changes that merely attempted to give it a more contemporary look. Operations of this sort seldom turn out for the better.

The present scheme, with one exception, appears to be more reasonable since it is confined to refurbishing the window sash and the installation of a screening wall on the roof. The applied granite around the base, however, should be eliminated. Where the loading docks are to be closed on the south side, the concrete wall and window openings should be continued in the same manner as on other elevations.

Before submitting any final plans for our consideration, we would like to suggest that the architect of the Housing and Home Finance building, Marcel Breuer, be consulted for any suggestions he might have, since the two buildings are so closely related on site.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

William Walton
Chairman

Honorable Bernard Boutin
Administrator
General Services Administration
Washington D. C.

EXHIBIT B

21 November 1963

Dear Mr. Jett:

The revised design for Marion Park landscaping presented to our meeting on November 20 still lacked the unity which we feel is appropriate for a small urban park.

We hope that our detailed discussions with your architects clarified our views and will enable them to arrive at a satisfactory design.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

William Walton
Chairman

Mr. T. Sutton Jett
Regional Director
National Capital Region
National Park Service
1100 Ohio Drive, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20242

EXHIBIT C

November 21, 1963

Dear Mr. Wirth:

The Commission of Fine Arts yesterday approved a design for a new bridge over Rock Creek at Calvert Street, N. W. just north of the Zoo bypass tunnel.

The design was approved largely because it is part of a system of similar type structures, and under such conditions it is usually better to preserve continuity by adhering to one style. Where new bridges will not be part of an existing series, the Commission recommends that the present standard plan be restudied and new designs developed with special attention to railings as we suggested to your representatives.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

William Walton
Chairman

Honorable Conrad Wirth, Director
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT D

22 November 1963

Dear Mr. Biggs:

I am writing to confirm approval of the design of Building 12A which was considered at the meeting of the Commission on November 20. Upon studying the additional site material furnished by your architects, it was apparent that the new building would fit in quite well with its surroundings.

I hope you will understand our request to view the large site model prior to the consideration of any new building designs. Since all new construction affects the campus as a whole, it is essential that we have a more complete picture of future plans before we can make an informed judgment about individual projects.

Although we expect to meet in December, it probably would be better to wait until January or February when we would have more time to consider the master plan in detail. Please let us know at least two weeks in advance of any presentation so that the staff will have adequate opportunity to schedule the meeting.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

William Walton
Chairman

Mr. Howard M. Biggs
Chief, Research Facilities Planning Branch
Division of Research Services
National Institutes of Health
Bethesda 14, Maryland

EXHIBIT E

21 November 1963

Dear Mr. Boutin:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at its meeting on 20 November, approved in principle the plan to remodel the fenestration of the Bureau of Printing and Engraving Building at 14th and C Streets, S.W.

The proposed treatment of the window panels would vary according to prominence from public view; tinted glass on the principle or 14th Street facades, alternating fiberglass and stone panels within the courtyards, and fiberglass panels on the 15th Street elevation behind the colonade.

The sample fiberglass panel, which had been installed at the Commission's request, was also inspected and found to be satisfactory except for the color, which tended toward a blue-gray. A warmer tone would be more suitable. The scale of the individual panes in the sash should also be kept closely related to the existing sash, especially on the 14th Street elevation - where the use of glass will make the window structure more important.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

William Walton
Chairman

Honorable Bernard Boutin
Administrator
General Services Administration
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT F

Dear Mr. Lewis:

The Committee of the Whole, at its meeting on [illegible],
resolved to publicize the plan to demolish the [illegible] in the
[illegible] of Planning and Engineering Services in [illegible].

The proposal, involving an estimated [illegible] would [illegible]
to premises for public [illegible] Street [illegible] on the [illegible] and
Grover Terrace. [illegible] Thursday, [illegible] evening [illegible] the
[illegible], the [illegible] public on the [illegible] [illegible]
the [illegible].

The [illegible] Planning [illegible], after [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] engineers, has also [illegible] the [illegible] to [illegible]
[illegible] for the [illegible] which [illegible] [illegible] a [illegible]. However [illegible]
[illegible] be [illegible] [illegible]. The [illegible] is [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

COMMISSTION OF FINE ARTS

The Regents of the Smithsonian Institution, the Commission of Fine Arts, and Miss Katharine N. Rhoades, or Mrs. Eugene Meyer, as provided in Paragraph 4 of the Codicil to the Will of the late Charles L. Freer, have examined the following objects:

1 Chinese painting, Sung; "Chien-tze with a shrimp net".

~~1 Indian painting, Pahari, ca. 1750; Rajah and his ladies in the palace courtyard.~~

~~1 Indian painting, Pahari, late 18th century; court lady on a balcony.~~

1 (Pair) Japanese paintings, Muromachi period, by Yamada Dōan (d. 1571); mynah birds.

1 (Pair) Japanese paintings (screens), Edo period, Kano school, by Naonobu, 17th century; A - man and woman in boat, B - travellers in oxcart arriving at door of a building.

1 Japanese pottery bottle, Momoyama, Shino-Oribe ware; gourd-shaped, decorated with grapes and trellis design.

1 Japanese pottery tile platform, Momoyama, Oribe; reddish with abstract design in white and dark slip.

1 Japanese pottery plate, Edo, Nabeshima ware; celadon, decorated with design of reeds in blue and iron glaze.

1 Japanese pottery vase, Edo, by Hōsei (signed); brown glaze.

~~1 Japanese pottery tray, Edo, by Kenzan (signed); decorated by Hōin (signed); square, with peony design in brown on white.~~

EXHIBIT G

1 (Pair) Japanese pottery eagles, Edo, Arita ware; painted in overglaze enamel colors.

~~1 Japanese wood sculpture, Fujiwara period; seated figure of a Buddha, gilded, with stand;~~

which have been recommended for purchase by the Freer Gallery of Art by Mr. John A. Pope, Director, and they hereby approve the purchase.

For the Regents of the Smithsonian Institution

WILLIAM WALTON, Chairman 11/20/63

For the Commission of Fine Arts